

A young girl with long dark hair, wearing a bright green hoodie and a pink bow, is shown in profile, reaching out with her hands towards a large, iridescent bubble. The background is a lush green park with trees and a fence, creating a soft, bokeh effect. The overall mood is joyful and hopeful.

FIRST5
San Joaquin 

Strategic Plan

2022-2027

SJKids.org

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INTRODUCTION

About First 5 San Joaquin

San Joaquin County is vibrant, diverse, and rich in heritage. Our children are our community's greatest asset. We honor our children and their families by working to ensure they get a strong start and have [access to opportunities and services to meet their needs](#).

The work of First 5 San Joaquin has always been marked by a passion for the community it serves. [For over 20 years, First 5 San Joaquin has focused on listening to the community and partnering with multiple organizations to reach areas of the greatest need for children and families](#). Since its inception in 1999, First 5 San Joaquin has invested more than the \$213 million (as of January 2021) toward improving the lives of children and families in San Joaquin County. First 5 San Joaquin has invested in a wide range of programs and strategies to meet a broad range of goals and objectives, and has forged long-term partnerships that have advanced the shared vision to see all children thrive in San Joaquin County.

First 5 San Joaquin has watched significant changes take place in the local community and has learned from the tremendous body of information on brain development and program outcomes. As a result, First 5 San Joaquin has committed itself to a rigorous examination of its past, present, and most importantly, the future roles that it may play in San Joaquin County. The Strategic Plan for 2022-2027 is the result of this process.

The Purpose of the Strategic Plan

Proposition 10 requires all county commissions “adopt an adequate and complete County Strategic Plan for the support and improvement of early childhood development within the county. The strategic plan must include a description of the goals and objectives proposed to be attained; a description of the programs, services, and projects proposed to be provided, sponsored, or facilitated; and a description of how measurable results of such programs, services, and projects will be determined by the County Commission using appropriate and reliable indicators.”

First 5 San Joaquin acknowledges that children ages 0 to 5 thrive when their families and communities also thrive. As such, it recognizes the need to develop an “integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative system” described in the language of the California Children and Families Act that supports not only young children, but also individuals, families, and communities.

This last year has presented our communities with a unique set of challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic crisis have created a great deal of uncertainty for the families that we serve. While some national level data reveals that the circumstances surrounding the pandemic have resulted in an increase in mental health issues, domestic violence, food insecurity, and other challenges, the full impact of the pandemic has yet to be fully understood. The extent of the challenges we face may not be clear for many years to come. In the face of this changing landscape of community need, First 5 San Joaquin recognizes the need for learning about what new local data is revealing, listening to what the community is saying, and developing strategies in response.

First 5 San Joaquin Commission

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STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027 AT A GLANCE

First 5 San Joaquin promotes the optimal development of children ages 0 to 5 by focusing investments in four goal areas: Quality Early Learning, Child Health and Development, Resilient Families, and Strong Systems. The purpose of the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan is to inform how First 5 San Joaquin can make the best possible use of its investments across these goal areas. The below goals and strategies were developed based on community data and input from community members, parents/caregivers, service providers, and other stakeholders:

	Quality Early Learning	Child Health and Development	Resilient Families	Strong Systems
Goal	Enhance early care and education settings so children have the social-emotional and cognitive skills they need to succeed in school.	Improve the health, mental health, and wellbeing of young children by advancing prevention, care coordination, screenings, and supports.	Promote parental resilience, social connections, concrete support, and knowledge of parenting and child development.	Improve, integrate, and expand local systems to meet the needs of all children and families in a high quality, equitable, and sustainable manner.
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Quality preschool services •Childcare quality enhancements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Developmental screening and early intervention services •Mental health supports for children •Oral health service coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Family engagement •Home visiting •Mental health and substance abuse supports for parents •Safe and affordable housing •Early literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promotion of and linkages to available services and supports •Information dissemination and referrals •Community awareness, public outreach, and education on issues related to children and their families •Training and capacity building
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increased number of children who participate in a high-quality preschool program •Enhanced quality of centers; family childcare homes; and family, friend, and neighbor provider care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increased number of children who receive a developmental screening and are referred for needed services •Increased number of children who access dental health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increased understanding of child development and positive parent-child interactions •Increased parent engagement in child’s school activities •Increased permanent housing •Increased frequency of reading with child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increased number of families served who are high need, experience disparities, or live in hard-to-reach areas •Strengthened workforce to meet the diverse needs of families •Increased partnerships and service coordination •Increased use of data to inform service delivery and programming

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Vision	All San Joaquin County children will thrive in supportive, nurturing, and loving family environments, and are safe, healthy, and ready to succeed in school and life.
Mission	Our mission is to build resilient families, connected communities, and equitable systems of care through strategic investments and partnerships, so that children, prenatal through age 5, are ready to succeed in school and life.
Values	These values represent First 5 San Joaquin's general guiding principles and has encompassed the focus of First 5 San Joaquin's recent work.

Equity: Place the needs of children, prenatal through age 5, at the center of our work, and do so in equitable, and culturally and linguistically effective ways.

Collaboration: Promote a collaborative culture by facilitating and participating in partnerships across disciplines and stakeholder groups, and solicit and listen to the ideas of others, encouraging transparency and open dialogue.

Quality Improvement: Remain dedicated to building integrated, continuously improving, innovative programs and systems to maximize investments that result in the highest quality services for children and families.

Stewardship & Sustainability: Manage resources with fiscal prudence, cost-effectiveness, and a long-term perspective, and look for opportunities to leverage (but not supplant) other dollars to increase impact.

Systems Change: Maximize impact by working as a systems change agent, promoting a seamless system of integrated and comprehensive services and supports for children and families.

Commitment to Equity

First 5 San Joaquin is committed to advancing equity and pursuing equitable outcomes in all aspects of our work. We take a strategic approach to consider the needs of diverse families and communities throughout our planning and programming efforts starting with assessing where opportunity gaps in access to resources and services exist and developing proactive strategies to address those gaps. Placing equity at the center of our work means focusing programs and investments on people and places that have the greatest barriers, and helping all children ages 0 to 5, families, and communities to have the best opportunities in life despite historic patterns of racial and economic exclusion.

Most recently, the First 5 Network, which is comprised of the 58 local First 5 Commissions, First 5 California, and the First 5 Association, has embarked on a journey to concentrate on race, equity, diversity, and inclusion (REDI) in its work.

REDI represents an organizational focus that is fundamental to First 5's mission and vision for California's young children and their families, especially knowing that nearly every indicator across key early childhood development areas shows an outcome gap, particularly by race and ethnicity. Part of this commitment includes increasing the capacity of local First 5 Commissions to engage in REDI dialogues, have access and capability to use tools and supports to participate in REDI work in their local environments, and be prepared to engage in and lead work addressing systems-level inequities working with partners.



First 5 San Joaquin is committed to this framework for addressing structural, policy, and systems-level inequities affecting young children, their families, and the community. Moving forward, First 5 San Joaquin staff will continue to work alongside the First 5 Network and local partners to strengthen internal capacity for REDI work, and to develop strategies to move forward the goal of providing services to children and families in equitable, and culturally and linguistically effective ways.

COVID-19 IMPACTS

For over 20 years, First 5 San Joaquin has had a long-standing commitment to support the health and well-being of families with children ages 0 to 5 in San Joaquin County. Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the needs, resources, and priorities of these families and the agencies that serve them. As of November 2021, nearly 100,000 San Joaquin County residents have contracted COVID-19,¹ and over 1,700 have died. Case rates in the county are highest among Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latinx, and Black residents. Death rates are highest among Black residents.²

In addition to the health and human toll of COVID-19, families in San Joaquin County have experienced broader societal impacts of the pandemic, including:³

- Limited socialization and access to community resources due to physical distancing and shelter-in-place guidelines;
- Family involvement in distance learning as schools and childcare closed;
- Job loss, income loss, and shifts to telecommuting; and
- Feelings of stress, fear, uncertainty, and trauma.

In response, First 5 San Joaquin and its funded partners rapidly changed their services to meet families' urgent needs while abiding by new public health and safety guidelines. This included providing virtual telehealth services, implementing contact free "DoorDash" models to distribute materials, increasing communication with clients via text messages and phone calls, and expanding services to meet urgent needs. While funded partners and families adapted to these emerging challenges, the pandemic's impact will continue to influence First 5 San Joaquin's program supports and priorities for the foreseeable future.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Data Collection

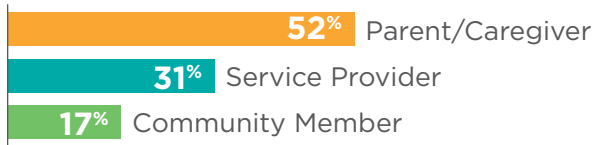
The 2022-2027 First 5 San Joaquin Strategic Plan is the result of a 10-month planning process that engaged the First 5 Commission and Committees, staff, funded and non-funded partners, key stakeholders, and the San Joaquin County community. Harder+Company Community Research, an external research and consulting firm, supported data collection efforts and collaborated with First 5 San Joaquin to define the parameters of the planning process, including the development of the workplan and timeline. To ensure the strategic plan was informed by and responsive to the needs of the community, feedback and data collection efforts included:

1. Working closely with the First 5 San Joaquin Planning Committee, along with Advisory, Finance, and Evaluation Committees throughout the planning process.
2. Presenting updates to the First 5 San Joaquin Commission with final recommendations presented in October 2021.
3. Conducting a thorough review of local population data.
4. Partnering with local agencies and organizations to hold 15 focus groups with diverse community stakeholders. This included parents and caregivers (including parents of children with special needs), service providers (including mental health providers), recipients of Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and members of the business community (see Appendix A for a complete listing of focus group implementers).
5. Gathering community input on strengths, needs, and opportunities via an online survey (n=189). The survey was available in English and Spanish and was shared via community distribution lists and social media.
6. Analyzing the population data, community focus group data, and data from the community survey, and sharing a synthesis of findings with the First 5 San Joaquin Planning Committee, Advisory Committee, and Commission.
7. Engaging with the San Joaquin County community throughout the planning process by publishing all meeting materials and updates online on the First 5 San Joaquin website and soliciting input over e-mail and by public comment participation at meetings.

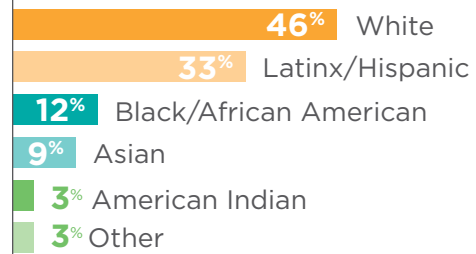
The figure below displays a summary representation of community members who participated in the online community survey.

Figure 1. Demographic representation of survey respondents (n=189)⁴

Groups Represented



Race/Ethnicity



Languages Spoken at Home



Prioritization of Strategic Opportunities

Based on the synthesis of information gathered, themes emerged in terms of needs in the community, ways in which First 5 San Joaquin’s work has been effective, as well as adjustments that can be made to address service gaps or needs, provide the greatest return on investment, and avoid duplication of existing services.

- Need:** The strategy responds to a significant persistent community gap or need
- Capacity:** First 5 San Joaquin has the capacity to implement the strategy in an impactful way
- Leverage:** First 5 San Joaquin can leverage other funds and partnerships to maximize reach and impact
- Sustainability:** The strategy can be sustained through blended and leveraged resources

Note: While these program recommendations are for the 2022-2027 strategic plan period and the hope is that funding will be available to support the above strategies and recommendations, it is important to note that an annual strategic plan review will be conducted, which will include a review of ongoing community needs, program outcomes, and funding availability. Findings of the annual review will help to determine what strategies and programs First 5 San Joaquin will continue to invest in.

Additionally, strategy implementation and future funding of program recommendations will also be contingent upon the availability of outside funding sources that provide support for a number of First 5 San Joaquin’s funded initiatives (e.g. WORKs programs, Raising Quality! IMPACT programs, some strategic communications projects, etc.).

GOAL 1: QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

Goal	Quality Early Learning: Enhance early care and education settings so children have the social-emotional and cognitive skills they need to succeed in school.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased number of children who participate in a high-quality preschool program• Enhanced quality of centers; family childcare homes; and family, friend, and neighbor provider care

Community Needs

A review of findings from community focus groups, a broadly distributed online community survey, and a scan of local population data revealed the following needs in San Joaquin County:

Population Data:

- In San Joaquin County, 42 percent of third graders met or exceeded grade-level standards in math. By race/ethnicity, this percentage was lowest among African American/Black third graders (16 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native third graders (23 percent), and Hispanic/Latino third graders (23 percent).⁵
- Additionally, 42 percent of third graders met or exceeded grade level standards in English and Language Arts. This percentage was lowest among African American/Black third graders (27 percent), American Indian/Alaska Native third graders (35 percent), and Hispanic/Latino third graders (36 percent).
- In San Joaquin County, there are 9,850 licensed childcare center spaces for children ages 0 to 5,⁶ and 6,192 licensed family childcare home spaces for children ages 0 to 5. There are approximately 6,200 children who are cared for by a grandparent or other provider receiving subsidized funding. There still remains a great number of unmet needs for childcare, primarily for families who are low income.

Community Survey Findings:

- Affordable childcare (reported by 23 percent of survey respondents) and parenting skills/knowledge of child development (reported by 9 percent of survey respondents) ranked among the top five most common needs according to survey respondents who were asked to identify the greatest needs of families with children ages 0 to 5.
- Survey respondents were asked to rate how important they believe it is to provide various services in the County, most of which already exist and some that could be potentially expanded in the future. Related to the goal area of Quality Early Learning, respondents rated infant/toddler preschool programs (90 percent) and early literacy programs (76 percent) as very important.
- Respondents (n=136) answered an open-ended question about services and programs they wish were available in the county. Responses related to Quality Early Learning included childcare and education (48 percent) and parenting support (18 percent).

Community Focus Group Recommendations:

- Provide parents with information about childcare when they leave the hospital or at a medical appointment
- Childcare for children with special needs
- Child development and literacy supports (i.e., some parents were concerned their children are falling behind in school)

- Culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and program information (e.g., parents need to be able to communicate with providers to have their needs met)
- Address inconsistency in providers accepting Medi-Cal; lack of continuity of care
- Increased training, professional development, and capacity of service providers including more diverse staff

Strategies & Program Recommendations

Quality Early Learning Strategies:

- Quality preschool services
- Childcare quality enhancements

Additional Strategies and Considerations Based on Community Input:

- Continue to fund quality childcare/preschool spaces
- Continue to fund childcare quality enhancements via the Raising Quality! IMPACT program (Grandparents Initiative) (pending funding availability)
- Pursue opportunities to provide parents with information about childcare when they leave the hospital or at the medical appointment

Program Recommendations:

Recommendations regarding programs to be funded or discontinued under this strategic plan are summarized below. These program recommendations are also for programs funded by First 5 San Joaquin’s general fund. With over half of First 5 San Joaquin’s current budget being categorical/non-general funds, funding for programs supported with other funding is based on other factors outside of the purview of this strategic plan.

- Decrease funding for preschool programs with tiered reductions effective FY 2022-2023.*
Per Planning Committee decision on 10/15/21, tiered funding reductions will be as follows: reduced to 75 percent in FY 2022-2023, to 50 percent in FY 2023-2024, and to 25 percent in FY 2024-2025, which would serve as the final year of funding. Budget reductions will be determined using 2021-2022 program budget allocations.
- Discontinue Kindergarten Bridge Initiative funding effective FY 2022-2023 as school districts have started funding this program.

**Funding will be allocated to this program area to support “flat” funding for three years, with additional funding consideration for two additional years, through 2026-2027, pending funding availability, positive outcomes, and ongoing community needs.*

GOAL 2: CHILD HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

Goal	Child Health & Development: Improve the health, mental health, and wellbeing of young children by advancing prevention, care coordination, screenings, and supports school.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of children who receive a developmental screening and are referred for needed services • Increased number of children who access dental health services

Community Needs

A review of findings from community focus groups, a broadly distributed online community survey, and a scan of local population data revealed the following needs in San Joaquin County:

Population Data:

- In San Joaquin County, 90 percent of newborns receive “any breastfeeding” in the hospital, while 67 percent of newborns are exclusively breastfed in the hospital. The percentage of newborns that are exclusively breastfed in the hospital is lowest for African American/Black newborns (46 percent), those identified as another race not listed (50 percent), and Asian American newborns (59 percent).⁷
- In San Joaquin County, 43 percent of children drink one or more sugar sweetened beverage per day.⁸ Thirty-seven percent of children ate fast food two or more times in the past week. Twenty-five percent of children eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- In San Joaquin County, 18 percent of children started kindergarten with untreated tooth decay.⁹ Additionally, there are twice the number of Medi-Cal patients per dentist compared to the industry benchmark,¹⁰ and only 38 percent of Medi-Cal members under age 20 have received preventive dental care.¹¹
- In San Joaquin County, 80 percent of pregnant people received prenatal care in their first trimester of pregnancy. This percentage was lowest for African American/Black pregnant people (74 percent) and Hispanic/Latino pregnant people (78 percent).¹²
- 14 percent of children in San Joaquin County have a special health care need. Learning disabilities, speech, and autism are the most common.¹³
- Population data also illustrates 14 percent of children ages 0 to 17 in California have a special health care need, meaning they had or were at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and required health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally.¹⁴ Further, in San Joaquin County, 14 percent of children participating in FamilyWORKs were referred for a special needs assessment and 42 percent of children participating in FamilyWORKs were referred for a social-emotional skill assessment.¹⁵



Community Survey Findings:

- Access to high quality medical care and food and nutrition assistance ranked among the top five most common needs according to survey respondents who were asked to identify the greatest needs of families with children ages 0 to 5.
- Survey respondents rated how important they believe it is to provide various services in the County, most of which already exist and some that could be potentially expanded in the future. Related to the goal area of Child Health and Development, the services that most respondents rated very important were: Developmental screenings and interventions (86 percent), child treatments and interventions (80 percent), prenatal/perinatal care (74 percent), healthy eating/physical activity programs (70 percent), and dental health care coordination (65 percent).
- Survey respondents expressed high interest in resources to identify children with potential developmental delays and connect them to needed services, with 86 percent of all respondents indicating these services as very important.
- Concerns about safety due to COVID-19 (reported by 13 percent of survey respondents) ranked among the top five most common barriers to quality care according to survey respondents who were asked to identify the challenges for families with children ages 0 to 5.
- Respondents (n=136) answered a free-response question about services and programs they wish were available in the county. Responses related to Child Health and Development included those related to nutritional education (48 percent).

Focus Group Recommendations:

- Prenatal and postnatal support including free birth services (doula, midwife, and home birth) as well as birth center and lactation services for Black mothers.
- Healthy eating/nutritional education and awareness for parents including resources and education on healthy food options.
- Mental health services, including services that work to overcome/consider barriers such as culture, immigration status, and stigma.
- For families experiencing homelessness, strengthen connections with doctors to get proper medical and mental health care.
- Prevention, intervention, early treatment, and emotional health support through mental health especially in communities of color.
- Screenings to identify children with special needs, particularly from underserved families.
- Improved early dental support including oral health classes in prenatal care, improved dental literacy, school health kit giveaways, and access to fluoride/sealants.
- Parent support for children with behavioral issues.
- Supports for children with linguistic/speech issues.

Strategies & Program Recommendations

Child Health and Development Strategies:

- Developmental screening and early intervention services
- Oral health service coordination
- Mental health supports for children

Additional Strategies and Considerations Based on Community Input:

- Continue to partner with University of California Cooperative Extension to support healthy eating and nutrition awareness.

- Continue efforts with communications firm (pending funding availability) to address stigma issues and connect CalWORKs families to mental health services.
- Pursue opportunities to increase the capacity of Help Me Grow staff to reach underserved and high need populations.
- Continue to recruit dentists to accept Medi-Cal under the SJ TEETH Initiative.
- Continue to support Ages and Stages Questionnaire screenings and referrals, including increased public awareness of the availability of screenings (e.g., through 2-1-1).
- Increase number of pediatricians who support Help Me Grow.
- Continue to fund United Cerebral Palsy to serve children who do not qualify for mandated special education services.
- Increase coordination with the Health Plan of San Joaquin and Health Net including data sharing opportunities and engagement with pediatricians to work on Help Me Grow, etc.
- Continue to pursue coordination opportunities among WORKs programs. For example, HousingWORKs families are often in FamilyWORKs and JourneyWORKs home visiting programs that provide referrals to needed services.
- Pursue opportunities to collaborate with other agencies on the availability to fund doula support with Medi-Cal billing.
- Pursue funding under the Mental Health Services Act to address some of the community recommendations regarding mental health supports.



Program Recommendations:

Recommendations regarding programs to be funded or discontinued under this strategic plan are summarized below. These program recommendations are also for programs funded by First 5 San Joaquin's general fund. With over half of First 5 San Joaquin's current budget being categorical/non-general funds, funding for programs supported with other funding is based on other factors outside of the purview of this strategic plan.

- Continue to fund United Cerebral Palsy to serve children who do not qualify for mandated special education services.*
- Pause on funding the Breastfeeding Initiative and pursue conversations with Breastfeeding Coalition on future opportunities. New potential start date is unknown.

**Funding will be allocated to this program area to support "flat" funding for three years, with additional funding consideration for two additional years, through 2026-2027, pending funding availability, positive outcomes, and ongoing community needs.*

GOAL 3: RESILIENT FAMILIES

Goal	Resilient Families: Promote parental resilience, social connections, concrete support, and knowledge of parenting and child development.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased understanding of child development and positive parent-child interaction• Increased parent engagement in child’s school activities• Increased permanent housing• Increased frequency of reading with child

Community Needs

A review of findings from community focus groups, a broadly distributed online community survey, and a scan of key population data revealed the following needs in San Joaquin County:

Population Data:

- In 2019-2020, home visiting programs in San Joaquin County delivered services to 1,305 families, or 17 percent of an estimated 7,675 high-priority children ages 0 to 5 in the county.¹⁶
- A review of California state-level child welfare data shows that rates of substantiated child abuse were highest among children in the 6-10 and 11-15 age group, i.e., among children found to have been abused or neglected, over half (26 percent and 26 percent respectively) were ages 6-10 and 11-15. Where data are available, state-level data disaggregated by race and ethnicity shows some variance among subgroups, ranging from 15 per 1,000 African American or Black children found to have been abused or neglected compared to 2.4 per 1,000 Asian or Pacific Islander children.¹⁷

Community Survey Findings:

- Affordable childcare and affordable housing were the two most common needs according to survey respondents who were asked to identify the greatest needs of families with children ages 0 to 5.
- Indicators of parental supports and assistance also ranked highly among needs of families with children ages 0 to 5. Parenting skills and knowledge of child development, food and nutrition assistance, and access to high quality care ranked among the highest needs.

Community Focus Group Recommendations:

- Parenting support for children with behavioral issues and support for children who need linguistic/speech services.
- Parenting classes that teach about post-partum depression, how to help their baby, practice safe sleep, and how to help raise emotionally-well children.
- Support for Black fathers that focus on positive mental health images.
- Child development and literacy support.
- Opportunities for parents to network and socialize (including parents of children with special needs).

Strategies & Program Recommendations

Resilient Families Strategies:

- Family engagement
- Home visiting



- Mental health and substance abuse supports for parents
- Safe and affordable housing
- Early literacy

Additional Strategies and Considerations Based on Community Input:

- Utilize COVID-19 Special Projects to fund an initiative to promote family engagement, and provide families with access to fun and free events (literacy programs, arts/music, outdoor-oriented programs, sports, and recreation) to reduce stress and support mental health (agenda item for October 28, 2021 Commission meeting).
- Continue to fund mental health and substance abuse supports for parents via the JourneyWORKs program (pending funding availability).
- Continue to fund home visiting services via the FamilyWORKs program (pending funding availability).
- Continue to fund services that help families secure safe and affordable housing (pending funding availability).
- Explore investing in Family Hui, a Strengthening Families model that is based on protective factors and is parent run/led.
- Move forward with plan to expand home visiting programs, including efforts to reach non-CalWORKs Black and African-American families, and seek opportunities for additional training on working with fathers.
- Continue to partner with home visiting programs to best meet families' unique needs (e.g., language, culture) as funding sources allow.
- Organize trainings for home visiting staff to build capacity to serve diverse families (e.g., fathers as the primary caregiver, different racial and ethnic groups).
- Continue Father Involvement Campaign with communications firm and Child Protective Services (pending availability of funding).

Program Recommendations:

Recommendations regarding programs to be funded or discontinued under this strategic plan are summarized below. These program recommendations are also for programs funded by First 5 San Joaquin's general fund. With over half of First 5 San Joaquin's current budget being categorical/non-general funds, funding for programs supported with other funding is based on other factors outside of the purview of this strategic plan.

- Continue to fund the Home Visitation Initiative with Parents as Teachers curriculum and health education curricula to address education and awareness regarding nutrition and healthy living.*
- Continue to fund Read to Me, Stockton! with emphasis on coordinating with home visiting programs.*
- Continue to fund current Family Engagement Services with the Stockton Unified School District and Child Abuse Prevention Council and release a Request for Proposals in January 2023 for Expanded Family Engagement Services to commence July 2023 based on lessons learned and positive outcomes (pending funding availability).*

**Funding will be allocated to this program area to support "flat" funding for three years, with additional funding consideration for two additional years, through 2026-2027, pending funding availability, positive outcomes, and ongoing community needs.*

GOAL 4: STRONG SYSTEMS

Goal

Strong Systems: Improve, integrate, and expand local systems to meet the needs of all children and families in a high quality, equitable, sustainable manner.

Outcomes

- Increased number of families served who are high need, experience disparities, or live in hard-to-reach areas
- Strengthened workforce to meet the diverse needs of families
- Increased partnerships and service coordination
- Increased use of data to inform service delivery and programming

Community Needs

A review of findings from community focus groups and a broadly distributed online survey revealed the following needs in San Joaquin County:

Population Data:

- Strong systems meet the diverse needs of their community members. In San Joaquin County, there are 28,082 children ages 0 to 2 and 30,417 children ages 3 to 5.¹⁸
- Approximately 44 percent of children in San Joaquin County live with foreign-born parents,¹⁹ and 62 percent of children live with two parents present at home.
- The primary language of dual language learners in the County is Spanish (77 percent), followed by Punjabi (5 percent).²⁰ Two percent of the population speaks each of the following languages: Khmer, Tagalog/Pilipino, Hmong, Vietnamese, and Urdu.
- The most common racial/ethnic identity in the County is Hispanic/Latino (49 percent), followed by White (24 percent), Asian American (14 percent), African American/Black (7 percent), Multi-racial (5 percent), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (0.4 percent), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (0.4 percent).²¹

Community Survey Findings:

- Financial concerns emerged as a commonly cited need and barrier to accessing services among survey respondents, where one in five (20 percent) families with children 0 to 5 indicated financial challenges as a common barrier to accessing programs or services. This finding may suggest how access and affordability underlie a variety of other needs in the community.
- The lack of services offered in the community was also among the most cited barriers among survey respondents, which may suggest the need for more culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and program information.
- Survey respondents mentioned challenges with access and limited transportation as a barrier for families in San Joaquin County.
- The survey also sheds light on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with respondents impacted by stress (53 percent), social isolation (51 percent), and income loss (46 percent). The ongoing impact of the pandemic provides additional context into the larger system of challenges that may continue to affect families' abilities to access and take advantage of services and programs.

Community Focus Group Recommendations:

- Support with basic needs, access to high-quality Internet services, and reliable and affordable transportation as areas of need.
- Support for Black families, including parenting support for Black fathers and health (including mental health) services specifically catered to Black families and parents.
- Consider culture and language to inform service provision planning given that culture and language barriers that often prevent families and parents from participating in programs.
- Engage populations disproportionately impacted by health disparities, including communities of color, people experiencing homelessness, and people experiencing disabilities.
- Improve the integration and expansion of the system of services offered in the county to better meet the needs of families in need of additional support and services.

Strategies & Program Recommendations

Strong Systems Strategies:

- Linkages to and promotion of available services and supports
- Information and referral
- Community awareness, public outreach, and education on issues related to children and their families
- Training and capacity building



Additional Strategies and Considerations Based on Community Input:

Equitable Access to Services:

- Expand the reach of existing programs to those who are underserved.
- Fund (and promote) 2-1-1 to provide short-term, general care coordination support.
- Continue to explore opportunities with Behavioral Health Services staff to assess if Mental Health Services Act funds are available for home visiting workforce development opportunities.
- Help to build parent and caregiver capacity regarding the use of technology to access services.

Wraparound Services and Care Coordination:

- See Equitable Access to Services recommendation regarding funding and promoting 2-1-1 to provide short-term, general care coordination support.

Service Coordination:

- Continue to coordinate with Human Services Agency regarding homelessness services, access to community centers, etc.
- Coordinate with Regional Transit District and other programs to help promote available transportation services.
- Coordinate with the City of Stockton to promote free internet (when available).
- Coordinate with the County's Perinatal Equity Initiative.
- Increase systems coordination between medical and dental providers as well as other systems. Coordination has begun with Children Now, Health Plan of San Joaquin, and California Department of Health Services.
- Continue home visiting coordination work and pursue additional funding to address home visiting coordination goals.

Infrastructure Investments:

- Continue to explore funding opportunities to expand affordable housing for families.

Other Strategies:

- Continue to expand reach with new partners by building on business community partnerships.
- Provide training and capacity building opportunities to increase awareness of available services and resources.

Program Recommendations:

Recommendations regarding programs to be funded or discontinued under this strategic plan are summarized below. These program recommendations are also for programs funded by First 5 San Joaquin's general fund. With over half of First 5 San Joaquin's current budget being categorical/non-general funds, funding for programs supported with other funding is based on other factors outside of the purview of this strategic plan.

- Set aside funding for systems-level work.*
Per Planning Committee decision on 10/15/21, funding for systems-level work, will focus on workforce development for preschool teachers, childcare providers, and home visitors.
- Expand 2-1-1 funding to include staff to provide short-term, general care coordination support. This program will support up to two staff.*

**Funding will be allocated to this program area to support "flat" funding for three years, with additional funding consideration for two additional years, through 2026-2027, pending funding availability, positive outcomes, and ongoing community needs.*

MEASURING OUR RESULTS

First 5 San Joaquin is committed to supporting evidence-based programs and practices based on solid evaluation. Evaluation drives learning. First 5 San Joaquin will continue to gather, analyze, and report information about the services provided and the effectiveness of those services. First 5 San Joaquin is concerned with both how well a program performs and the extent to which services have improved the lives of children and their families.

First 5 San Joaquin monitors the impact and effectiveness of its investments in each goal area through the Evaluation Matrix. A new Evaluation Matrix will be in place effective July 2022 and will be organized by First 5 San Joaquin's new goal areas identified in this strategic plan. The Evaluation Matrix includes measures of success, outcomes, and data sources. Measures of success are community-level indicators that First 5 San Joaquin and its funded partners strive to achieve through their collective efforts. These measures are used to assess overall progress towards First 5 San Joaquin's vision for children in San Joaquin County.

For each program, the Evaluation Matrix also includes outcomes (i.e., the direct number of people served, or services delivered as a result of the strategy, and the impact of the strategy on program participants and other stakeholders) and data sources that help to capture these quantitative and qualitative outcomes. First 5 San Joaquin reviews and reflects upon these data on an ongoing basis to assess each program's operations and inform ongoing quality improvement efforts. The data also help to explain the extent to which First 5 San Joaquin strategies are contributing to changes in county-wide measures of success.



LONG-RANGE FINANCIAL PLAN

Fund Balance Reporting

	FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	FY 2025-2026	FY 2026-2027
Beginning of Year Fund Balance	\$7,960,097	\$4,477,844	\$5,237,941	\$5,179,748	\$4,856,576
Total Projected Revenue	\$7,113,494	\$6,115,584	\$5,722,303	\$5,628,078	\$5,458,971
Commission Budget	\$10,595,747	\$5,355,487	\$5,780,496	\$5,951,250	\$5,356,125
Total Available Funds	\$4,477,844	\$5,237,941	\$5,179,748	\$4,856,576	\$4,959,422

Revenues

	FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	FY 2025-2026	FY 2026-2027
Projected Prop 10 Revenue	\$6,438,195	\$5,992,698	\$5,684,897	\$5,587,970	\$5,420,331
Other Revenues	\$628,493	\$75,000	---	---	---
Estimated Interest Earnings & Others	\$46,806	\$47,886	\$37,406	\$40,108	\$38,640
Total Projected Revenues	\$7,113,494	\$6,115,584	\$5,722,303	\$5,628,078	\$5,458,971

Obligations

	FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	FY 2025-2026	FY 2026-2027
Operating Expenses	\$1,382,054	\$698,542	\$753,978	\$776,250	\$698,625
Program Investment	\$9,213,693	\$4,656,945	\$5,026,518	\$5,175,000	\$4,657,500
Total Obligations	\$10,595,747	\$5,355,487	\$5,780,496	\$5,951,250	\$5,356,125

CAPACITY BUILDING & SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of systems and supports provided through First 5 San Joaquin investments for the well-being of children and families in San Joaquin County is a priority. Future annual allocations to First 5 San Joaquin’s general fund are expected to continue to decline at an annual rate of three to five percent. To date, the First 5 San Joaquin Commission has managed declining fiscal resources by leveraging federal and state dollars, seeking out foundation funding, and being fiscally prudent. Currently, over half of First 5 San Joaquin’s budget is categorical/non-general funds.

The recent budget allocations for childcare and early learning in the President’s proposed Build Back Better Plan, and the Governor’s state-level investment plan to incrementally roll out Universal Transitional Kindergarten in California beginning in FY 2022-2023, will provide

deeper investments at the state and federal levels for childcare/preschool services, and the potential for significant impact to the availability of preschool services in San Joaquin County in the coming years.

Additionally, in November 2022, there will be a ballot initiative to overturn the current ban on the retail sale of flavored tobacco products. Currently, First 5 San Joaquin's 10-year plan is based on the ban being upheld. If the ban is not upheld, that decision will result in additional First 5 revenue. First 5's throughout the state are supporting the ban.

First 5 San Joaquin will continue to work with other county leaders and partners to proactively pursue new opportunities to obtain or leverage resources that support the early childhood system in San Joaquin County. These resources may fund First 5 San Joaquin or other partners, which would help institutionalize early childhood programs among community agencies.

As we look to the future and seek ways to sustain programs, the following issues will be addressed by First 5 and partners.

1. Ongoing evaluation utilizing the continuous quality improvement model. This allows First 5 San Joaquin and its funded partners to ask, "how are we doing?", "can we do it better?", and "can we be more effective?"
2. Promotion of programmatic results and their impact through the creation of infographics that are shared with policy makers, potential funders, community, and social media.
3. Utilization of a grant writer that is assisting First 5 San Joaquin in prospecting work – learning about and developing relationships with private philanthropy organizations, as well as seeking state and federal funding opportunities.
4. Exploration of local funding, primarily through the Mental Health Services Act and the Health Plan of San Joaquin – the CalAIM Initiative and Medi-Cal funding that may address the social determinants of health.
5. Advocacy for policy changes that will allow for state/federal funding for programs.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

In order to focus more funding to First 5 San Joaquin to advance the mission and ensure it can continue to provide the foundational infrastructure, leadership, systems architect and partnership support in communities throughout the county; it is essential to strengthen early childhood development systems and realize improved opportunities and outcomes for the community's youngest children and their families. Thus, an updated policy platform, in alignment with county goals needs to be developed in year one of the new strategic plan.

In the first years of the new strategic plan, a sustainability plan to continue to diversify and expand funding will be developed that includes a multi-system approach. In year one of the strategic plan, the sustainability plan needs to include the development of a series of approaches for direct funding that combines opportunistic initiatives and embed core funding in program and systems initiatives. In order to develop a concise and practical sustainability plan, it is important to view it alongside other areas, including policy, evaluation, strategic communications, and diversification of funding.

Appendix A – Focus Group Implementers

Focus Group Implementer/ Organization	Target Population
Family Resource Network	Parents with young children with special needs
Delta Health Care	Pregnant/breastfeeding parents
Stockton Unified School District	Mental Health Clinicians
California Tribal TANF Partnership	Native American families
Asian Pacific Self-Development and Residential Association (APSARA)	Southeast Asian Community
Business Council San Joaquin County	Business community
Catholic Charities Diocese of Stockton	Latinx/Spanish-speaking parents with young children
Mary Magdalene Community Services	Black/African-American fathers with young children
San Joaquin County Office of Education, Head Start San Joaquin	Parents with young children (low-income)
Registered Dental Hygienist in Alternative Practice (RDHAP) Connect	Oral health service providers
United Cerebral Palsy	Parents with young children with special needs
San Joaquin General Hospital	Pediatricians
San Joaquin County Human Services Agency	Social Workers
Preschool program coordinators/ administrators	Preschool service providers

Appendix B – Footnotes

- ¹San Joaquin County COVID-19 Dashboard as of November 2, 2021. Accessed [here](#).
- ²Public Health Alliance of Southern California COVID-19 Healthy Places Index Resource Map. Accessed [here](#) on November 2, 2021.
- ³Data from the online community survey administered on strengths, needs, and opportunities in San Joaquin County (Unpublished data, 2021).
- ⁴Note: respondents could select more than one answer; percentages may add up to more than 100 percent. Responses in the Other category for racial/ethnic identity of survey respondents include Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and Arab/Middle Eastern
- ⁵California Dept. of Education, [Test Results for California’s Assessments](#) (Jan. 2020). As cited on [www.kidsdata.org](#), a program of Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved September 2021.
- ⁶California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, [California Child Care Portfolio](#) (Apr. 2020); U.S. Census Bureau, [American Community Survey public use microdata](#) (Oct. 2020). As cited on [www.kidsdata.org](#), a program of Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved September 2021.(Unpublished data, 2021)
- ⁷California Dept. of Public Health, [In-Hospital Breastfeeding Initiation Data](#) (Oct. 2019). As cited on [www.kidsdata.org](#), a program of Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved September 2021.
- ⁸UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, [California Health Interview Survey](#) (Mar. 2018). As cited on [www.kidsdata.org](#), a program of Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved September 2021.
- ⁹San Joaquin County Public Health Services. [San Joaquin County Oral Health Needs Assessment](#) (November 2018). As cited in the First 5 San Joaquin TEETH evaluation report. Retrieved September 2021.
- ¹⁰San Joaquin County Public Health Services. [San Joaquin County Oral Health Needs Assessment](#) (November 2018). Calculated using data obtained from the California Department of Health Care Services in 2018. As cited in the First 5 San Joaquin TEETH evaluation report. Retrieved September 2021.
- ¹¹Dental Utilization Measures and Sealant Data by County and Age, Calendar Year 2013 to 2018. Retrieved from <https://data.chhs.ca.gov/> on March 5, 2020. Measure limited to continuously enrolled Denti-Cal beneficiaries ages 1-20. As cited in the First 5 San Joaquin TEETH evaluation report. Retrieved September 2021.
- ¹²California Dept. of Public Health, [In-Hospital Breastfeeding Initiation Data](#) (Oct. 2019). As cited on [www.kidsdata.org](#), a program of Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved September 2021.
- ¹³Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the [National Survey of Children’s Health and the American Community Survey](#) (Jan. 2021). As cited on [www.kidsdata.org](#), a program of Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved September 2021.
- ¹⁴Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the [National Survey of Children’s Health and the American Community Survey](#) (Jan. 2021). As cited on [www.kidsdata.org](#), a program of Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved September 2021.
- ¹⁵First 5 San Joaquin FamilyWORKs Evaluation Brief (March 2021).
- ¹⁶First 5 San Joaquin Home Visiting Strategic Plan 2020-2025. Retrieved from https://www.sjckids.org/Portals/2/SJC%20Home%20Visitation%20Strategic%20Plan%20FOR%20PUBLIC%20COMMENT%204_8_21.pdf. Retrieved November 2021.
- ¹⁷Webster, D., et al. [California Child Welfare Indicators Project Reports](#), UC Berkeley Center for Social Services Research (Jul. 2019). As cited on [www.kidsdata.org](#), a program of Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved September 2021.
- ¹⁸California Dept. of Finance, [Population Estimates and Projections](#) (May 2020); U.S. Census Bureau, [Population and Housing Unit Estimates](#) (Jul. 2020). As cited on [www.kidsdata.org](#), a program of Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved September 2021.
- ¹⁹Child age 2020 U.S. Census Bureau, [American Community Survey](#) (Jan. 2020). As cited on [www.kidsdata.org](#), a program of Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved September 2021.
- ²⁰California Department of Education, [Data Quest](#) (September 2021).
- ²¹California Dept. of Finance, [Population Estimates and Projections](#) (May 2020); U.S. Census Bureau, [Population and Housing Unit Estimates](#) (Jul. 2020). As cited on [www.kidsdata.org](#), a program of Population Reference Bureau. Retrieved September 2021.



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